



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 6, 2006

CONTACTS: Katia Blackburn 206-684-0253
Hueiling Chan, 206-624-5633

Website launched to help immigrants and refugees find safety from domestic violence

SEATTLE — The Multilingual Access Project (MAP), a collaborative of community agencies specializing in serving immigrants and refugees, has just launched a new website to help women and families who don't speak English find safety from domestic violence.

The website, www.map-seattle.org, provides information on domestic violence and how to get help in 10 languages — Chinese, Korean, Amharic, Russian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Somali, Hindi and Spanish. In addition, it provides information about immigration and human trafficking, also issues of concern for immigrants and refugees.

Most women living with domestic violence face common barriers when they seek help, explains Terri Kimball, director of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention in the Seattle Human Services Department. (The department funds MAP and other community agencies providing domestic violence shelter and prevention services to immigrants and refugees.) These barriers include social isolation, lack of money to allow independent living, fear of losing children, lack of information or knowledge about what services and support exist in the community, and social or religious norms that limit women's autonomy.

Immigrant and refugee women who are abused face additional barriers including limited English proficiency and no access to community resources or support in their native language. Without access to interpreters and translated materials, women are often forced to remain with their abusers, who may provide them with bad information or withhold information and critical documents such as passports, green cards and driver's licenses. Undocumented immigrants may be unwilling to report abuse or violence because they fear deportation for themselves, their children or their partners, upon whom they are often economically dependent.

The MAP website provides a wide range of information including resource and emergency phone numbers, and how to get help through local interpreters and police. Shelters, hotlines, advocacy services and multilingual service agencies are listed, as well as information for concerned friends and family members and information on how to get out of immediate danger and find safe housing.

MAP collaborators include the Chinese Information Service Center, Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center, Refugee Women's Alliance, Consejo Counseling and Referral Service, and Chaya.

###